

Meeting Report

Thirtieth Annual Congress on Veterinary Acupuncture: IVAS Report

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More than 155 participants from 25 countries attended the 30th Annual IVAS Congress, September 8–11, 2004 in Oostende, Belgium. The focus was on veterinary acupuncture (AP) and immunology, and the event was sponsored by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS). IVAS is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in the practice of veterinary AP as an integral part of the total veterinary health care delivery system. The Society endeavors to establish uniformly high standards of veterinary AP through its educational programs and accreditation examination. IVAS seeks to integrate veterinary AP and the practice of Western veterinary science, while also noting that the science of veterinary AP does not overlook allied health systems, such as homeopathy, herbology, nutrition, chiropractic, kinesiology, etc. (www.ivas.org).

DAY 1

Robert Schaeffer (USA) introduced the participants to AP. This lecture was directed at those participants who were new in the field of veterinary AP and also to refresh the knowledge of other participants before the more specific lectures.

Amer Silim (Canada): Overview of the Immune System. This keynote speaker gave a detailed overview of the immune system. He concluded that we needed to explain the scientific basis of AP for the successful treatment of allergies and other immune disorders. ‘The brain is mightier than the immune system’, he said. He stressed the emerging immune-related diseases in animals as well as humans, and the possibility of countering them with a judicious approach including alternative therapies.

Kevin May (USA) led a wetlab on equine AP. The wetlab included a visit to the nearby racetrack.

Michelle Tilghman (USA) led another wetlab on the treatment of geriatric dogs. She stressed the need for a tailor-made exercise regime to supplement any treatment intervention in geriatric patients for better results.

DAY 2

Amer Silim (Canada): Overview of the Immune System. Dr Silim recapitulated the roles of interleukins, T-helper cells, cytokines and other key compounds involved in immunology.

Richard Tan (USA: Balance Method Applied to Immune Mediated Diseases) discussed his complex balancing methods, used to diagnose and treat external and internal syndromes. He also explored the relationships of the channels to the hexagrams of the I-Ching.

Jean Guilherme Joaquim (Brazil: A Comparison Between AP Surgery and Surgery + AP Treatment in Dogs with Thoracolumbar Disk Disease—An Immunological Approach). Stelio Luna gave this paper on behalf of his colleague, who could not attend.

He discussed 17 cases of thoracolumbar disk disease in dogs. He analyzed a comparison of the results obtained after AP, surgical or surgical + AP treatment. His research team found that surgery + electro-AP at ST36, GB34, BL18, BL23, KI03 and BL60 was efficient to treat the Western pattern of neurological diseases associated with thoracolumbar disk disease in dogs. However, Dr Luna mentioned pre-trial administration of corticoids by veterinarians before referral to the university hospital and lack of a significant number of cases as limitations of the reliability of the conclusions. He also spoke

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from his experience about the limitations of conducting trials in alternative medicine in institutions of poorer countries.

Jen-Hsou Lin (Taipei: Determination of the Safe Depth of Back Acupoints in Cats). His team discussed their research in relation to safe needling depths of back acupoints in cats. Using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), the safe depths of some important acupoints on the bladder and governing vessel channel was determined in three groups of cats with different body index (thin, medium and fat). The safety depths of AP differed significantly in the three different groups, as did the difference of depths in different acupoints in the same group. The maximum safe needling depth of AP in the back area was derived by multiple regression analysis. The derived empirical formula was: $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3$, where Y = safe depth (in mm), X_1 = weight (kg), X_2 = age (years), X_3 = body length (cm) and B_0 – B_3 were the computed variables. Variation of safety depths in different acupoints and cats with different body index was noted. It was concluded that as a precaution, needling depths beyond 1 cm should be treated with extra caution until the expertise is developed in needling techniques.

Shigeo Hara (Japan: Optimization of Frequency and Voltage in Electro-AP Stimulation of Dogs) concluded in his study that an optimum condition for electro-AP was found by gradually increasing the stimulation voltage while keeping the stimulation frequency at a low level or by gradually increasing the stimulation frequency while keeping the voltage stimulation at a low level. The optimum frequency range for relaxation in dogs was demonstrated to be 1–25 Hz.

Bruce Ferguson (USA: The Formation and Circulation of Wei Qi in TCM) discussed the role of Wei Qi in the immune system and the process of its formation and circulation. He states that according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) context, T-lymphocytes comes from the liver and cellular immunity is derived from the lower burner (kidney and liver). Citing the example of a castle surrounded and defended by water, he stressed the need for maximum tonification of the kidney for a correct immune system. However, he did emphasize the right approach of enhancing both the superficial and deep aspect of 'Wei Qi' circulation for best immune system function.

Francesco Longo (Italy: AP therapy in Reproductive Problems in Mares) gave interesting case reports of successful treatment of >300 mares with endometrial inflammations, ovarian syndrome, prolonged winter anestrus, prolonged spring anestrus and other endocrine disruption syndromes with AP.

Marco Testa (Italy: Clinical Use of Extraordinary Channels in Horses) discussed the clinical use of 'Qi Mai' (extraordinary channels) in horses. The speaker concluded that by means of these key points, it was possible to treat cases of pathological courses not only by rebalancing physiological, psychological and behavioral functions, but also by converging both acquired and cosmic, primordial energies in one process.

Uwe Peterman (Germany: AP in Acute and Chronic Immunodeficiency) began by saying that immunodeficiency is caused by an exhaustion of kidney energy. His presentation of several case studies demonstrating immunodeficiency caused by the perturbative field principle was very informative. In conclusion, the speaker stressed the identification and removal of factors that disturb the pathological condition and cause a never-ending circle of chronic disease by successful intervention with AP treatment.

DAY 3

Jeffrey Yuen (USA: Divergent Channels and Their Application to Immune-mediated Diseases) discussed the qualities, pathways, implications, functions and clinical application of the divergent channels, with emphasis on immunomodulation.

Kwang-Sup Soh (Seoul: Kwan: Characteristic Features of Intravascular Bonghan Duct) described the features of the Bonghan duct (BD) system, named after the original discoverer, Bonghan Kim (Korea). Dr Kim claimed the discovery of the anatomical basis of the acupoints and channels in the early 1960s; he reported the classical channels as part of the new BD circulatory system distributed throughout the body including the surface of internal organs even inside blood and lymph vessels. Dr Soh showed video clips of their dissection techniques for the special surgery of live animal models. The possible role of the BD and Bonghan corpuscles in AP was discussed. The presence of large quantities of mucopolysaccharides in the BD and the recent finding of some researchers such as H. L. Langevin and J. A. Yandow (2002) (relationship of acupoints and channels to connective tissue planes) and their role in the effect of AP were discussed. There was not enough evidence to exactly relate the two. It was unclear if the BDs at the surface of the body where we trace channels may have lost their conformity to integrate in the tissue and yet have kept their characteristic features including totipotent stem cell flow, one of the physiological functions of the BD. More research is planned on the BD system.

Marcia Scognamillo-Szabo (Brazil: Effect of AP on the Hypersensitivity Response Induced by *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* Tick Antigens in Dogs and Guinea Pigs) concluded that AP at ST36, SI01, LI11, Yin Tang and Er Jian acupoints reduced experimental tick antigen-induced hypersensitivity reaction in dogs.

Ying-Ling Wu [Taipei: Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI)—Investigation of Cardiac Function in Cats]. The representing speaker introduced the group's work on the effect of AP at Neiguan (PC06) on cardiac functions of cats monitored by employing cardiac MRI techniques. It was reported that electro-AP treatment at PC06 significantly reduced blood pressure and shortened the duration of recovery from administered anesthetics. The established cardiac functional parameters were also found to be improved in the electro-AP treatment groups of cats compared with the controls.

Are Simeon Thoresen (Norway: Recent Work on Cancer Using the Ko-Cycle) discussed his work on AP in cancer treatment. He challenged everyone to use only one point—Taichong-LV03—to treat mammary cancer, and to report back to him in 1 year. His results with that point were remarkable in both human and canine patients. This brings some hope when some US scientists have ruled out the use of tamoxifen in breast cancer treatment because of its notorious side effects. Dr Thoresen said that the primary aim and most important function of holistic medicine is to stimulate the body's own control mechanism, via the classical Ko Cycle in TCM: fire × metal × wood × earth × water × fire. One must bring control to unregulated growth and development of cells that can induce cancerous cells, and, at the same time, avoid stimulating the wrong processes that may stimulate tumor growth. In using the classical Ko Cycle, he always needles one point on the Yin channel of the controlling phase. For example, for cancer that starts in the stomach (earth), or along the course of the ST channel (such as the mammary gland or the lateral canthus of the mouth), the controlling channel is LV (wood). Any LV point will help, but he found LV03 to be best. For cancer that starts in the lung or large intestine, or along the course of the LU or LI channels (metal), the controlling channel is HT (fire). Any HT point will help. In treating multiple skin cancers, or sarcoids, identify the exact channel(s) on (or near) which the first lesion appeared. For example, if a melanoma or sarcoid appears first at the medial canthus of the eye (BL channel; water), any point on the SP channel (earth; Ko controller of water) will help.

He also said that there is a second Ko Cycle, in the form of a cross, whereby the N, S, E and W phases are fire, water, metal and wood, respectively, with earth in the centre. In that (cross) cycle, a point on TH channel is best to bring control in prostate or cervical cancer (water). The key point touches the lateral edge of metacarpal 4 (ring finger), ~25 mm distal to TH02–Yemen–water door.

Mary Battistella (USA: Human and Small Animal Scalp Acupoint Comparison) briefly discussed the different human scalp zone systems of AP and their possible inclusion in small animal medicine.

Mariana C. Galdino [Brazil: Effect of Continuing Stimulation of Acupoint CV5 (Shimen) in Domestic Female Cat Fertility] reported that prolonged AP stimulation of CV05 is a potential method of achieving contraception in female cats (queens).

Elena Petrali (Canada: Treatment of Lumbar Spine in Canine Using a Combination of Balance Method, Extra Points and Motor Points) discussed AP treatment of motor points of muscles related to the vertebral segment in a 5-year-old bitch with suspected mild spondylosis. In conjunction with AP, she advised incorporation of massage or manipulative techniques, plus acupressure, and stretching and strengthening exercise at home. These additions significantly reduce recovery time.

DAY 4

James Skoien (Switzerland: TCM View of Immunology) discussed in great detail the immune system from a TCM viewpoint. He stressed the importance of the fundamental substances (Qi-Xue, Ying-Wei, Jin-Ye and Jing). His vast knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine and how to select herbs to treat specific TCM syndromes related to various immune-related disorders and cancer therapy was the highlight of the lecture.

Sagiv Ben-Yakir [Israel: Bio-Zoo AP (B-ZAP)] discussed the B-ZAP concept and explained the veterinary applications of hirudotherapy and apitherapy. The basics of such treatment, precaution and his clinical case references were an interesting topic that generated many queries and questions from the audience. He revealed interesting observations on leeches attaching to an acupoint during hirudotherapy, adding AP therapy to the blood sucking. He also mentioned the properties of bee venom including melittin with a potent anti-inflammatory and analgesic property. He demonstrated the technique of apitherapy and shared his experience of treating stubborn cases of traumatic peripheral neuropathies, degenerative myelopathy and intervertebral disk disease with the same.

Annica Nygren Thoresen (Norway: Report from Our Work to Re-establish Where AP Channels Travel and Where the Acupoints are Located in the Horse) Are Thoresen on behalf of his wife (who could not attend for medical reasons) discussed their methods to detect the acupoints and channels of special relevance in treating Qi Xu (energetic deficiency) in horses.

Bruce Ferguson (USA: The Circulation and Exteriorization of Wei Qi in Immune Disorders and Cancer in TCM) concluded that cancer cells are in a relative state of hyperactive cellular replication which is Yang and correlated with heat. Heat attacks the blood which is the Ying energy. If the heat of the cancer process attacks the blood, there are many methods to cool it. The simple and most effective treatment is to needle SP10 and BL17. Thus approach to treatment of cancers should first focus to stimulate the zone of transit of Wei Qi by stimulating various acupoints for different parts such as GV20 for the head, CV17 for the thorax, back for Shu points, KI16, ST25 for the abdomen, and ST30, BL57 for lower Jiao. There must also be exteriorizing of Wei, an increase of the secondary circulation and formation of Wei. To control heat, the Ying should be circulated, increase the activity of the Zong Qi, cool the blood, calm the mental state, stimulate the mental activity of the specific organ in which there is heat and use Xi-Disintegration points to dissolve blood obstruction and stagnation, particularly SP08 for abdominal masses.

Francesco Longo (Italy) discussed the immunomodulatory effects of AP in dairy cattle. His results showed a significant decrease in somatic cell count (SCC) and neutrophils, and an increase in number of macrophages in the treatment group over the control groups.

C. P. Ferreira (Brazil: Effect of Micro-doses of $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ to Induce Luteolysis in Nelore Cows) concluded that luteolysis is achieved in Nelore cows (*Bos taurus indicus*) even at 50% of the recommended doses of luprisotol for dairy cattle, regardless of the route of administration [intramuscular or intravulvosubmucosal (i.v.s.m.)]. However, the i.v.s.m. route as reported by previous researchers does seem to be more effective than systemic administration of luteolytic agents. The administration of lower doses of luteolytic agent at the Bai Hui acupoint had no or a negligible luteolytic effect in Nelore cows.

Anna Hielm-Bjorkman (Finland: The Veterinary AP Clinic at Helsinki University Animal Hospital: What Can We Look Back on After 6 Years?) Dr Hielm discussed her experiences of running a veterinary AP clinic at Helsinki University. She discussed the dos and don'ts necessary to establish the practice of alternative medicine in university hospitals. Most academic veterinarians are skeptical or negative towards alternative medicine, and careful research and clinical work is necessary to gain their trust. Her experiences gave the audience much confidence and inspiration.

Roman Skarda [USA: The Effects of AP and Electro-AP (2 Hz, 100 Hz, and 2 and 100 Hz Alternating Frequencies) on Cutaneous and Rectal Analgesia and Immunoreactivity of Methionine–Enkephalin and Dynorphin in Venous Plasma of Horses—A Comparative Study] discussed AP, electro-AP (at low and high alternating frequencies) on cutaneous and rectal pain threshold and their relationship to powerful endogenous opioids, methionine–enkephalin (MK) and dynorphin (DN). He concluded that MK and DN play an important role in production of cutaneous and rectal pain relief in horses treated with electro-AP at bilateral BL18, 23, 25 and 28.

Stelio Luna (Brazil: Immunomediated Thrombocytopenia Treated with AP and Chinese Herbs) concluded that immunomediated thrombocytopenia disease in dogs can be successfully treated with acupuncture and Chinese herbs.

Krishna Kaphle (Nepal/Taiwan: Trophin-like Action of Some Selected Herbal Extracts) discussed research on

herbal extracts for potential trophin (gonadotrophin/adrenocorticotrophin)-like action. The speaker mentioned the need for more scientific research in medicinal herbs, and explained the constraints and limitations in conducting scientific research with herbal formulae and extracts in living tissues. The speaker concluded that herbs with potent steroidogenic activity act differently from phytosterols. The possible stimulating and inhibiting actions of various herb extracts involve action in different key enzymes and intracellular signaling mechanisms. Steroidogenic acute regulatory (sSTAR) protein and the intracellular local immune system of the steroidogenic cells are the main targets for active compounds of various herbs having stimulatory action.

Dirk Verhoeven (Belgium) noted an editing error in the table of herbs in the preceding lecture. His questions on the role of such herbs in gonadless and neutered animals were thought-provoking. He had satisfactory results using *Epimedium macranthum* to treat lazy and depressed animals (deficiency in TCM terms).

Linda Boggie, IVAS President, stressed the need for scientific research in the different fields of alternative medicine. She promised the full support of IVAS in the quest for scientific validation of AP. This is essential if alternative therapy is to gain wider acceptance and establish itself as an indispensable part of treatment in humans and animals. She thanked the participants for their active involvement in various events of the congress. She promised to work even harder to overcome the hurdles ahead and extended an invitation to all to participate in the 31st annual congress of IVAS (2005), scheduled for Park City, UT, USA.

Acknowledgments

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